Joint Commission to enhance Cooperation with Sri Lanka

917. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to set up a joint commission at the ministerial level to enhance cooperation with Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details of the talks held recently with the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka; and

(c) to what extent it would bring peace to the North-East region?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c). During EAM's visit to Colombo, it was decided that steps will be taken to establish an Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission chaired by the respective Foreign Ministers. While providing us an opportunity to exchange views on the ethnic issue, the visit also underlined our desire to develop all round bilateral relations, particularly in economic, trade and cultural fields. Our belief was reaffirmed that the political framework created by Sri Lanka following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 provides a viable basis for a reasonable and enduring settlement of the ethnic issue. In this context, it devolves on the Government of Sri Lanka to implement fully, in letter and spirit, the 13th Constitutional Amendment.

Support to democratic forces in Burma (Myanmar)

918. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the reasons for which Government are not openly and vigorously supporting the democratic forces in Burma (Myanmar) in their struggle to re-establish a duly-elected Government in that country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): Government's sympathy and moral support for the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar are well-known and have been publicly expressed on several occasions. However, consistent with our well-established policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, Government cannot take any action which could be construed as interference in Myanmar's internal affairs.

Delivery time for posting letters|M.O.|V.P.P. etc. at Guntur to Delhi

919. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the journey time of a Letter|M.O./V.P.P./Registered Letter/Book Post|Parcel posted at Guntur to be delivered at Delhi and vice versa;

(b) whether there is any delay in this regard during the last 5 years; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor and what steps have been taken to overcome those?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) Sir, journey time of a letter/MO|Registered. Letter Posted at Guntur to be delivered at Delhi and vice versa is on the 3rd day and for Book Post|VPP|Parcel on the 5th day.

(b) No, Sir, except in cases of late/non-operation of trains|flights.

(c) No step to overcome delay due to late/non-operation of trains/flights can be taken as they are beyond the control of the department.

Shri Simranjit Singh Mann's offer to send Sikhs to the Gulf war

920. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Shri Simranjit Singh Mann has publicly offered to send lakhs of sikhs to join the U.S. ranks in the battle-front in the Gulf; if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(b) whether Government are aware that a memorandum was given by Shri Mann to U.S. Ambassador in this regard; if so, what is Government's reaction in regard to these activities of Shri Mann?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MNIISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b). Government have seen Press reports to this effect. It would not be appropriate for Government to comment on the private opinions of an individual.

Deputy Prime Minister's Visit to Norway by a Chartered Flight

921. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRI SOM PAL:
MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Deputy Prime Minister was offered commercial flight for his recent trip to Norway; if so, what are the reasons for which Government preferred to send him by chartered flight in spite of the campaign to cut down wasteful expenses;

(b) what was the cost of the Deputy Prime Minister and his party's tour to Noray; and

(c) what was the number of persons who accompanied the Deputy Prime Minister as members of his team and who were the members of his team?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Keeping in view the importance of the occasion and the possible uncertainties of commercial flight schedules a decision was taken to charter a special flight to enable the Deputy Prime Minister to attend the funeral of the late Norwegian King.

(b) these details are being obtained.

(c) 13, as indicated below:

1. Shri Jagdeep Dhankar, Member of Parliament.
2. Shri K. K. Deepak, OSD, a Govt. employee.
3. Shri Subhash Chander, 1st PA to DPM—a Govt. employee.
4. Shri Rajgopal, Security Officer, Air India.
5. Shri M. S. Sokhanda, PA to DPM—a Govt. employee.
6. Shri Pradeep Singh Sihag, PA to DPM—a Govt. employee.
7. Shri Shamsher Singh, PSO—a Govt. employee.
8. Shri Surender Jain, a progressive farmer.
9. Shri H. K. Shangi, Ex-Chairman, Haryana Industrial Development Corporation Adviser, Town/Country Planning.
10. Shri Prabhat Dabral, Doordarshan—a Govt. employee.
11. Shri J. N. Mathur, Doordarshan—Govt. employee
12. Shri Gopal Gupta, Doordarshan—a Govt. employee.
13. Shri Arif S. Khan, Director (EW), Ministry of External Affairs.